

# South Atlantic

## *Fisheries Coordination Office*

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### Station Facts

- Established: 1986.
- Number of staff: four permanent full-time.
- Annual budget (FY 98) \$354,000.
- Staff located in Raleigh, Morehead City and Edenton, NC, in Washington, D.C., and in Vero Beach, FL.

### Geographic Area Covered

- South Atlantic coordination of Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) interests in coastal fisheries issues.
- North Carolina, South Carolina and portions of Georgia and Florida with respect to issues relating to watersheds of rivers entering the Atlantic Ocean.

### Station Goals

- Coordination of restoration and conservation efforts involving anadromous fishes and their habitats in accordance with interjurisdictional goals.
- Development of coastwide standards and protocols for the way in which all Atlantic coastal agencies collect, manage and disseminate fisheries statistics.
- Recovery of shortnose sturgeon and other species listed under the Endangered Species Act.
- Proper management and conservation of interjurisdictional fisheries and other aquatic resources, including their habitats, in South Atlantic coastal waters and watersheds.
- Provide fisheries management and technical assistance to national wildlife refuges.
- Provide environmental education.

### Services Provided To

- State and Federal partners in restoration of striped bass, American shad, hickory shad and blueback herring.

- State and Federal partners in recovery of shortnose sturgeon and other species listed under the Endangered Species Act.
- Interjurisdictional fisheries management commissions, councils and other partnership entities in cooperative management of South Atlantic coastal fisheries and their habitats.

### Activity Highlights

- Represents the FWS on the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) in many positions, i.e., on the Management boards for Striped Bass, Bluefish and Weakfish; on committees--Habitat, Habitat & Fisheries Management plans; on technical committees--Striped Bass, Bluefish, Spot & Atlantic Croaker; on Plan Development teams--Atlantic Sturgeon, Shad & River Herring.
- Represents the FWS on the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council in several capacities, i.e., on the committees for Habitat, Demersal Species and Coastal Migratory.
- Represents the FWS on the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council in many posts, i.e., on the committees for Shrimp, Calico Scallops, Bluefish, Red Drum, Spot, Atlantic Croaker, Spanish Mackerel and Marine Reserves; on the Habitat & Environmental Protection Advisory Panel and the North Carolina and Florida sub-panels.
- Manages program for the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program which involves the coordination, facilitation, planning, and management of input from 23 Atlantic state, regional and Federal fisheries management agencies.

## South Atlantic Fisheries Coordination Office

- Prepares ASMFC Fisheries Management Plan and/or Amendment Writer for weakfish, bluefish, shad and river herring, essential fish habitat, and Atlantic sturgeon.
- Coordinates the multi-agency restoration of the Albemarle Sound-Roanoke striped bass stocks.
- Participates in many capacities on the FWS's Ecosystem teams including the Roanoke-Tar-Neuse-Cape Fear in North Carolina, the Savannah-Santee-Pee Dee in SC, the Altamaha (Co-Team Leader) in Georgia, and on the North Florida and the South Florida (Co-Team Leader) teams.
- Provides a fisheries outreach message to civic and conservation groups, to schools and the general public.
- Participates in "Take-A-Kid Fishing" activities in North Carolina and Florida.
- Provides fisheries technical assistance and project reviews to FWS's Ecological Services, Endangered Species and Refuge programs.
- Coordinates and provides leadership on the SEAMAP Winter Striped Bass Tagging Cruise in the coastal waters of North Carolina.
- Coordinates fisheries input for the restoration of the Everglades, the Indian River Lagoon, the St. Johns River and Lake Worth in Florida.
- Represents the FWS on the National Instream Flow Program Assessment Steering Committee in its efforts to increase instream flow awareness and protection.
- Provides technical assistance to state partners on the fishery management plan development teams for striped bass and river herring in North Carolina.

### Questions and Answers

*What does your office do?*

The South Atlantic Fisheries Coordination Office (FCO) is a relatively new type of field station, generally referred to as a "coordination offices", in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The South Atlantic Fisheries Coordination Office is made up of support offices located in Raleigh, NC; Edenton, NC; Washington, D.C.; and in Vero Beach, FL.

These offices coordinate the work of many different FWS offices that deal with coastal aquatic resource issues. Work is carried in our cooperative partnerships with many other state and Federal agencies, fishery management councils, commissions and private organizations in managing aquatic resources of the South Atlantic coastal waters. The office provides a single point of contact to improve communication and cooperative efforts within the FWS and between the FWS and these other organizations.

*What is the FWS role in managing the aquatic resources of the South Atlantic?*

The FWS is chiefly concerned with the management of what is referred to as interjurisdictional fisheries resources. The term "interjurisdictional" generally means a fish population that crosses state or international boundaries.

In the South Atlantic, the FWS is concerned with restoration and management of anadromous species. The term "anadromous" refers to a fish species that spawns in rivers but spends part of its life in the ocean. Falling into the interjurisdictional category are coastal and marine species such as striped bass, American shad, hickory shad and a multitude of others.

The FWS participates as a partner with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Atlantic states in helping to manage these species. The FWS is a non-voting member of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, which manages fisheries in Federal marine waters (out to two hundred miles).

*Does your office get involved in educating the public on fisheries issues?*

The South Atlantic Fisheries Coordination Offices has for many years been active in providing outreach to civic and conservation groups, to schools, and to the general public. For the past several years, the office has hosted a "Take-A-Kid Fishing" events in North Carolina and in Florida.